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**Haaland confirmation a historic moment for Indigenous peoples**

*Move promises renewed respect for our public lands, our natural resources and our climate*

Washington — Today, the Senate voted 51-40 to confirm Rep. Deb Haaland (D-NM) as the next U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Rep. Haaland's historic nomination — she was the first Native American to be nominated to the top spot at the U.S. Department of the Interior — has now culminated in a confirmation vote that positions her to be the first Native American to run Interior and the first Native American Cabinet secretary in U.S. history.

**Statement by Adam Kolton, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:**

“For the first time in our nation’s long history, Native Americans will have a seat at the highest level of the federal government. We cannot right the wrongs of colonization or undo the history of violence toward and the displacement of Indigenous peoples in our country. But the confirmation of the first Native American to lead any U.S. cabinet agency, particularly one that is responsible for the stewardship of millions of acres of once stolen and now public land, is a historic and hopeful moment.

“Secretary Haaland brings to the job an understanding of the Native American experience and a deep personal connection and commitment to preserving the lands and waters that sustain people and communities across the country. She was the first U.S. representative to champion the need to pursue an ambitious national goal of conserving 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030, and as Interior Secretary she will play a critical role in implementing President Biden’s ambitious conservation agenda, confronting the climate crisis and advancing the cause of environmental justice.

“We look forward to working with Secretary Haaland to safeguard Alaska’s national treasures including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, which is sacred to the Gwich’in people whose food security and culture depends on its protection from oil and gas development.”

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*Alaska Wilderness League stands with, serves and supports the many people and organizations that believe in a sustainable future for Alaska. We honor and respect the cultures of Alaska Natives whose way of life remains deeply connected to the state’s land, waters, and wildlife. We believe that Alaska’s long-term economic future and subsistence traditions are inexorably tied to the health and sound stewardship of its natural resources, which support hunting, fishing, tourism and unrivaled outdoor experiences that are central to Alaskans’ quality of life.*



[www.AlaskaWild.org](http://www.AlaskaWild.org)

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